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Federal reimbursements to five north suburban school districts that educate students from Naval Station Great Lakes for the next two years would be boosted, if President Bush signs a measure funding 14 Cabinet agencies later this week.

The U.S. House passed a \$516 billion appropriations bill Monday night that includes a provision in the health care and education department's budget to increase the so-called "impact aid" to the school districts in Glenview, Highland Park, Highwood and North Chicago.

The U.S. Senate was expected to approve the measure this week, and the president to sign it over the weekend, both U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Illinois, and U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk, R-10th said this week. Both worked on crafting the "impact aid" amendment.

"This Congressional action demonstrates the federal government's commitment to the education of military dependent children," said Maureen Hager, superintendent of North Shore District 112, which serves Highwood and Highland Park. "This effort also recognizes the local commitment put forth on behalf of military families living in our community."

The federal education department compensates local school districts that educate children who live in military housing, which is exempted from local property taxes, but the "impact aid" is far less than what the districts pay to educate the students.

A change in the funding formula contained in the appropriations bill would make nearly \$9 million available to North Chicago, Highland Park, Highwood and Glenview to supplement the cost of educating the more than 1,500 children of Great Lakes military personnel.

That change would mean that North Chicago District 187 would continue to receive \$6,400 per student, while the elementary and high school districts in Glenview, Highland Park and Highwood would get \$3,000 per student, up from about \$600.

The lawmakers and local school officials had been trying for nearly three years to get Congress to adjust the "impact aid" because the Navy is redistributing Great Lakes military housing throughout the area.

The Navy and Forest City Military Communities, its private development partner, are providing for a total of 1,658 residences through demolition, renovation and new construction, including 230 housing units in Glenview, 209 in Fort Sheridan and 1,110 in North Chicago.

The higher occupancy rates and increased number of bedrooms within the units in Glenview, Highland Park and Highwood mean more children of military personnel are expected to enroll in Glenview District 34, Glenbrook High School District 225, North Shore District 112 and Township High School District 113, which serves Deerfield and Highland Park.

Conversely, the number of military housing units in North Chicago is expected to drop, so North Chicago District 187 could lose \$6.5 million in federal funding after 2011 if the "impact aid" formula is not altered.

The amendment to the appropriations bill specifically allows the five public schools serving Naval Station Great Lakes to pool their students and maximize the federal education assistance they receive.

Both Durbin and Kirk are confident the bill will be signed.

But even if that happens, without a separate legislative action, Kirk said he and Durbin will have to continue to add the same amendment to future appropriations bills to ensure the five districts continue receiving "impact aid" at the new, higher level.

Glenview District 34 Superintendent Jerry Hill was cautiously optimistic Monday night that the "impact aid" would be boosted.

"We've never come this far before," Hill said. "This would be good for the taxpayers of

Glenview."

Currently, District 34 isn't receiving any impact aid because only 90 students from military families are enrolled, fewer than the 3 percent of total enrollment required for the aid to come to the district.

When all 230 units the Navy is building in Glenview are occupied in 2009, enrollment from military families is expected to rebound to more than 200 students, a number that would meet that enrollment criterion.